

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1- 20 remain pending in this application. No claims have been canceled, added or withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-10 and 13-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Itonori et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,943,443) in view of Yamagata et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,048,113). Claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Itonori et al in view of Yamagata et al and further in view of Kubota (U.S. Patent No. 6,041,323). These rejections are traversed as follows.

Yamagata et al discloses that similar character strings in a table (Table 7) can each have one character selected and replaced with another. Itonori et al discloses extracting and dividing a code character string in column 18, line 65 to column 20, line 65.

As stated in the present specification, a search is performed for text data containing character recognition errors, which are produced by the OCR during the character recognition operation on an image document, the number of expanded words is reduced by removing those n-character candidate words with low emergence probabilities from the similarity table and generating the expanded words using this table. This arrangement can realize a speech in a within a practical period

of time while maintaining a high quality of search precision (see page 40, lines 3-13). It is pointed out to the Examiner that the language such as "a similarity table previously storing groups of similar partial character strings each consisting of a plurality of characters" is clearly supported by the specification in the portion that recites "partial character strings each consisting of a predetermined number n of characters ($n \geq 2$)" as described on page 6, lines 15-17 of the specification. In addition, the statement that the expanded words each have a product of the emergence probabilities of the similar partial character strings is also supported by the statement that "a product of emergence probabilities of the similar partial character strings" as set forth on page 6, lines 1-2 of the specification and also in Figs. 1-5.

It is submitted that the pending claims patentably define the present invention over the cited art. In particular, the Examiner's attempted reliance upon Yamagata et al, Itonori et al and Kubota still fails to render the claimed invention obvious and unpatentable.

As mentioned earlier, the present specification states that a search performed on text data containing character recognition errors, which are produced by an OCR during the character-recognition operation on an imaged document. The number of expanded words is reduced by removing those n -character candidate words with low emergence probabilities from the similarity table and generating the expanded words

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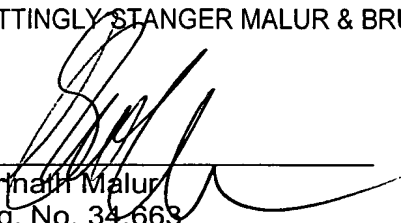
using this table. This makes it possible to realize high speed searching while maintaining quality and precision.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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